

Operations Plan

2002-2003



SOUTHWEST COORDINATION CENTER
March 2002

I Introduction

This plan is a guideline for the Southwest Coordination Centers' (SWCC) internal operations, which provides for cost-effective utilization of federal wildland agencies' fire protection resources.

II Authorities

The Southwest Coordination Center is established under the authority of the Economy Act (31 USC 686) through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Forest Service. The Center was established to eliminate duplicate logistical support and coordination activities of individual agencies, which results in significant cost savings through a consolidated operation.

The Center Director has delegated authority from the co-operating federal land management agencies to mobilize and allocate firefighting resources throughout the Southwest/Nation for wildland fire or prescribed fire needs as documented in the Southwest Area Interagency Mobilization Guide and to develop policy (for participating agency approval) to support dispatch and coordination practices.

III Plan Review And Oversight

The SWCC Operations Plan will be reviewed annually by the Southwest Fire Management Board (SWFMB) at the January Board meeting. Direction or guidance specific to an individual agency and/or revisions to the SWCC Operations Plan will be approved by the SWFMB at their annual fall meeting.

Oversight of SWCC operations and the Center Director will be the responsibility of the Southwest Fire Management Board which is an interagency group consisting of the BLM State Fire Management Officers for the States of Arizona and New Mexico (BLM), the Assistant Director for Operations of Aviation and Fire Management (USFS), the Assistant Director Tri-Area (BIA), State of Arizona Fire Management Officer (AZS), Regional Fire Management Officer (NPS), State of New Mexico Fire Management Officer (NMS) and the Regional Fire Management Coordinator (FWS).

IV General

A. Mission

The Southwest Coordination Center serves as the Geographic Area Coordination Center for the Southwest. The Center is the focal point for logistical support and intelligence relative to anticipated and ongoing wildland fire activity for all federal and cooperating state wildland fire agencies. The

Center facilitates movement of resources between agencies' units and, concurrently, ensures fire suppression capabilities to support large fire potential by monitoring weather and prescribed burning activity within the area. The Center also responds to requests for support to other geographic areas from the National Interagency Coordination Center at Boise, Idaho.

Although the Center was primarily established to support wild-land fire suppression efforts, it also plays a significant role in providing logistical support to the needs of other natural or other disasters such as earthquakes, floods, volcano eruptions, terrorist activities, homeland security, etc. The Center is the focal point in the Southwest for area level support to Emergency Support Function #4 in a FEMA declared disaster.

In addition, the Center supports the general fire community through training, workshops and response to projects or tasks assigned by the Southwest Fire Management Board.

B. Management

Day-to-day operation and management of the Center is the responsibility of the Center Director. In the Center Director's absence, a "Acting" will be designated and identified on an "Acting" list. The Acting Center Director will have full authority delegated through official delegations of authority and the National/SW Area Mobilization Guides with authorities for mobilization, prepositioning and allocation of fire-fighting resources in the Southwest.

The Coordinator on Duty will be responsible for ordering the needed staffing to maintain service to the Zones, NICC, and other Geographic Coordination Centers.

Agency policy and constraints as well as other conceptual guidance developed by the SWFMB are communicated directly to the Center Director. The direction is usually limited to non-operational matters and is conceptual in nature.

Similarly, the Centers' concerns of an operational nature, will generally be discussed with the appropriate member of the SWFMB or their staff for guidance and/or resolution. Requests by field units for incident support from the Center will normally be handled on a first-come, first-served basis. When multiple incidents necessitate setting priorities for scarce resources, the Center Manager will utilize standard priority setting criteria, as stated in the National and Southwest Area Mobilization Guides, and allocate resources accordingly. As the competition for resources escalates, a Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Group will be established in accordance with direction in the Southwest Area Interagency Mobilization Guide. Determining the need to convene a MAC Group will be

the responsibility of the Center Manager.

C. Organization

The Center Staff is composed of representatives from the U. S. Forest Service, D.O.I Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service and the States of New Mexico and Arizona. (See Appendix A for current organizational chart.)

The Center Director is responsible for the management, leadership and administration of the SWCC and for maintaining contact with the SWFMB. The Center Director, will develop and the SWFMB will approve the annual program of work that will guide the Center's operation for the Fiscal Year. The Center Director will publish an annual Southwest Area Mobilization Guide, which specifies the policy and procedural direction guiding logistical support and coordination activities of the participating agencies in the Southwest. The Coordinators are responsible for monitoring resource status, processing resource orders, communicating with field units, developing and updating dispatch guides, compiling statistics, and insuring quality service is provided to the Zones and NICC. Each Coordinator rotates daily as COD.

The Coordinator on Duty is responsible for the day-to-day operations and staffing at SWCC. This individual also serves as the Area Coordinator responsible for coordinating the movement and placement of wildland firefighting resources in the SW. The individual also serves as the lead for SWCC facilities maintenance. The Coordinator on Duty shall be a rotating position from all of the agency coordinators in SWCC.

The Intelligence Coordinator is responsible for day-to-day operations of the SWCC Intelligence Section. Primary responsibility includes collecting, analyzing, and disseminating daily wildland fire activity and prescribed fire information, status of national resources, maintaining Area-wide and individual Station ERC Charts, managing the Area-wide Sit Report and ICS-209 Programs, and overseeing all aspects of the SWA Wildland Fire Operations Website. This individual also works as a member of the SWA Predictive Services Group providing detail fire danger data and information, and as SWCC Fire Information Officer, When the Lead Fire Information Officer is not available.

The Assistant Intelligence Coordinator provides primary backup and assistance to the Intelligence Coordinator during the wildland fire and prescribed fire seasons. The individual is responsible for gathering, compiling and distributing daily

situational assessments and reports.

The Geographic Area Fire Weather Program Manager is responsible for management of the meteorological and climatological program for the federal wildland fire agencies in the Southwest. This includes development of guidance and direction to field users in the monitoring and evaluation of the products and services provided by the National Weather Service (and other service providers), integration of meteorological and climatological information into Predictive Services and technology transfer of meteorological and climatological knowledge and expertise to wildland fire managers and users.

The Fire Weather Systems Specialist is responsible for development and analysis of meteorological information and its integration into products and services provided by the Predictive Services Section. The individual also is the primary lead for the management and use of Fire Danger Rating and the network of agency owned weather stations in the Southwest and assists the Fire Weather Program Manager in monitoring and evaluating meteorological services.

V Financial Management

A. Funding

Individual agencies will be responsible for salary costs for their employees assigned to the Center. Funding of non-salary operational expenses of the Center will be shared on an annual basis in the following manner: (FS-60%, BLM-20%, BIA-10%, and NPS 5%. (In a perfect world NMS 2½%, AZS 2½%). Contributions to general operations and maintenance of the Center by NPS and FWS may be provided in the form of positions and operational support in lieu of direct funding.

Percentages are calculated using the number of acres protected in Arizona/New Mexico with an adjustment to reflect historical workload. The Center Director, who will notify the SWFMB when changes are appropriate, will review the proportional agency shares periodically. The SWFMB will make the final decision on funding contributions of the participating agencies.

B. Budget

A preliminary budget request will be prepared by the Center Manager by July 15th of each year and submitted to the SWFMB for review and approval. The approved budget request will be shown in Appendix B. Using the percentages described above, funding from the Interior Agencies will be transferred to the Forest Service annually less agency contributions.

Procurement, travel, utilities, and training costs will be charged to individual USFS accounts (management codes) established specifically for Center operations. The Center Director will monitor the annual budget closely. The Center Director or Acting Center Director must approve all expenditures charged to the account. In addition, the Center Director will maintain fiscal records of expenditures by fiscal year.

VI Center Internal Operating Procedures

A Office Hours

The Southwest Coordination Center will be staffed according to seasonal needs. Outside of the geographic area fire season, office hours will be 0700-1600 Monday thru Friday.

During the fire season, office hours will be extended through adjusted work schedules, as determined by the preparedness levels in the SWA Mobilization Guide, to provide 0700-1800 hours coverage seven days per week. Office hours may also be adjusted to support other geographic area incident activity.

B After Office Hours

Emergency staffing to provide unscheduled after hours services will be provided through an "On-Call" Coordinator assigned to respond to calls. The Southwest Coordination Center telephone will be forwarded to the "On-Call Coordinator" when SWCC ceases operations for the day. Directions for this and all other protocols for daily operations at SWCC are covered in the SWCC Standard Operating Procedures guide given to all detailers in SWCC.

C Expanded Operations

During periods of fire emergency, work shifts and staffing will be expanded to provide up to 24-hour operations as the situation may dictate.

Office guides covering procedures for daily operations will be maintained, updated and available to personnel assigned/detailed to assist with activity.

All personnel detailed into SWCC will receive a copy of SWCC's Standard Operating Procedures document to become familiar with the day-to-day operations in the Center.

D Opening/Closing Office Procedures

Center Staff will be issued the necessary keys and door PIN numbers to allow them access to the office. It will be the responsibility of the last person leaving to turn off all unnecessary utilities and equipment, forward the phones to the "On-Call Coordinator" and secure/lock the office.

F Housekeeping

Each individual will be responsible for keeping their work areas orderly and for maintaining the office in general, including the conference rooms and lunchroom area.

G Telephones

During fire season, office staff will answer the telephone until business deems it necessary to add a receptionist to answer all incoming calls and direct them. At no time will telephones go unanswered.

H Cellular Telephones

Center staff will be assigned cellular telephones to facilitate "On Call" Coordinator responsibilities and for contact during/outside normal business hours.

I Record keeping, Current Situation and Annual Reports.

Agency manuals, handbooks, and other references will be kept current. All material will be readily available for reference.

Daily Situation Reports will be posted and kept current.

An Annual SWCC Activities Report will be completed and distributed listing resource activity conducted with the Center by agency by mid-January of the following year.

The Annual Fire Report for the Southwest Area will be compiled and distributed annually about February 1 following the fire season.

J Forms and Supplies

It will be the responsibility of the Center Staff to maintain the supplies and forms inventory. Currently, Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Bureau of Indian Affairs provide forms and supplies. Any special needs of a particular agency will be provided by that agency. As stocks are depleted, resupply will be purchased locally or ordered through GSA.

K Office Equipment

Maintenance of office equipment will generally be handled by the agency that either owns or leases the equipment using SWCC funds or offsets.

L Building Maintenance

All building maintenance, repair and/or modification needs will be referred to the Center Director. The Forest Service Regional Office contracts janitorial services.

VII Personnel Management Procedures

A Personnel Evaluations

Center employees will be evaluated using the appropriate forms and processes as directed by their personnel-servicing agency and Union agreements. The Center Director will be evaluated by the SWFMB in a process led by the Assistant Director of Aviation and Fire Management for Operations (USFS).

Agency Coordinators will be evaluated using the individuals' agency-specific evaluation form. Evaluations will be completed by the due dates established by each respective agency. Input for evaluations will be initiated by the appropriate supervisor with input from the Center Director and finalized by the agency staff. Evaluations, mid-year reviews, and training plan needs will be conducted jointly with the employee, the supervisor and specific agency staff. Evaluation forms will be initialed by the supervisor and the Center Director and signed by agency staff. All assignments in SWCC over 48 hours will receive a performance evaluation.

B Timekeeping/Travel

Center personnel will document their time and attendance on their respective agency-specific timekeeping forms. These forms will be reviewed and initialed by the supervisor and forwarded to their agency payroll timekeeper for processing. Proper time and attendance and travel recording is the responsibility of the employee and will be attended to as outlined by employing agency policy.

C Wellness Program

Each agency represented at the SWCC has a wellness program available to their employees. Due to the location of SWCC, it is difficult for Center personnel to participate in those programs. If personnel wish to take advantage of these programs in the SWCC vicinity they may set a schedule with their supervisor, to attempt to accommodate such. Schedules and activities will be in accordance with specific agency policy and guidelines.

IX Plan Approval

Submitted by:

VERNON ELY	Date
Acting Center Director	

Approved by:

WILLIAM WATERBURY	Date
U.S. Forest Service	
Southwestern Region	

WILLIE BEGAY	Date
Bureau of Indian Affairs	
Tri- Area Director	

BRYAN SWIFT	Date
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New Mexico State	
Forestry Division	

BOB LEE	Date
Bureau of Land Management	
New Mexico State Office	

JEFF WHITNEY

Date

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Region II

SOUTHWEST COORDINATION CENTER

